

INGREDIENTS

Dehydrated Alfalfa Meal, Soybean Hulls, Wheat Middlings, Cane Molasses, Oat Mill By-product, Vegetable Oil, Calcium Carbonate, Salt, Monocalcium Phosphate, Zinc Sulfate, Zinc Proteinate, Copper Sulfate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Sulfate, Manganese Proteinate, Cobalt Carbonate, Calcium Iodate, Ferrous Sulfate, Selenium Yeast, Sodium Selenite, Vitamin A Supplement, Choline Chloride, Riboflavin, d-Calcium Pantothenate, Nicotin, Folic Acid, Biotin, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Threonine Monontrate, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Vitamin B6 Supplement, Vitamin E Supplement, Vitamin C Supplement, Vitamin D Supplement, Vitamin K Supplement, Vitamin B1 Supplement, Vitamin B2 Supplement, Vitamin B3 Supplement, Vitamin B5 Supplement, Vitamin B7 Supplement, Vitamin B9 Supplement, Vitamin B11 Supplement, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Vitamin B13 Supplement, Vitamin B14 Supplement, Vitamin B15 Supplement, Vitamin B16 Supplement, Vitamin B17 Supplement, Vitamin B18 Supplement, Vitamin B19 Supplement, Vitamin B20 Supplement, Vitamin B21 Supplement, Vitamin B22 Supplement, Vitamin B23 Supplement, Vitamin B24 Supplement, Vitamin B25 Supplement, Vitamin B26 Supplement, Vitamin B27 Supplement, Vitamin B28 Supplement, Vitamin B29 Supplement, Vitamin B30 Supplement, Vitamin B31 Supplement, Vitamin B32 Supplement, Vitamin B33 Supplement, Vitamin B34 Supplement, Vitamin B35 Supplement, Vitamin B36 Supplement, Vitamin B37 Supplement, Vitamin B38 Supplement, Vitamin B39 Supplement, Vitamin B40 Supplement, Vitamin B41 Supplement, Vitamin B42 Supplement, Vitamin B43 Supplement, Vitamin B44 Supplement, Vitamin B45 Supplement, Vitamin B46 Supplement, Vitamin B47 Supplement, Vitamin B48 Supplement, Vitamin B49 Supplement, Vitamin B50 Supplement, Vitamin B51 Supplement, Vitamin B52 Supplement, Vitamin B53 Supplement, Vitamin B54 Supplement, Vitamin B55 Supplement, Vitamin B56 Supplement, Vitamin B57 Supplement, Vitamin B58 Supplement, Vitamin B59 Supplement, Vitamin B60 Supplement, Vitamin B61 Supplement, Vitamin B62 Supplement, Vitamin B63 Supplement, Vitamin B64 Supplement, Vitamin B65 Supplement, Vitamin B66 Supplement, Vitamin B67 Supplement, Vitamin B68 Supplement, Vitamin B69 Supplement, Vitamin B70 Supplement, Vitamin B71 Supplement, Vitamin B72 Supplement, Vitamin B73 Supplement, Vitamin B74 Supplement, Vitamin B75 Supplement, Vitamin B76 Supplement, Vitamin B77 Supplement, Vitamin B78 Supplement, Vitamin B79 Supplement, Vitamin B80 Supplement, Vitamin B81 Supplement, Vitamin B82 Supplement, Vitamin B83 Supplement, Vitamin B84 Supplement, Vitamin B85 Supplement, Vitamin B86 Supplement, Vitamin B87 Supplement, Vitamin B88 Supplement, Vitamin B89 Supplement, Vitamin B90 Supplement, Vitamin B91 Supplement, Vitamin B92 Supplement, Vitamin B93 Supplement, Vitamin B94 Supplement, Vitamin B95 Supplement, Vitamin B96 Supplement, Vitamin B97 Supplement, Vitamin B98 Supplement, Vitamin B99 Supplement, Vitamin B100 Supplement.

Best practices: Communicating “clean label” on-pack

Now that your team has designed and formulated a product that can be designated “clean label,” you need to design a packaging label. Are there any guidelines to guarantee that the consumer will understand your brand’s quality and advantage? How do you assure the success of your investment, and help move the package from shelf to cart?

The definition of clean label varies by category, but there is general agreement that a clean label product has fewer ingredients, more natural ingredients, and/or is more eco-friendly. Regardless of definition, there are a number of label strategies that are working for producers of today’s clean label products. In this article, we review those strategies with selections from various categories. We purposely chose brands and products that are sold in mainstream grocery and mass channels rather than specialty stores.

Now for the big news:

There is only one key packaging strategy: *differentiate!*

With so many products in the store competing for eyeballs, and with the consumer’s attention being shared with phones and kids, it is harder than ever to grab those precious few seconds of focused attention. So...make sure your package doesn’t blend in visually with the “not-so-clean” products on shelf.

On the following pages you will see brands/products that are successful in their categories by going out of their way to be different from the herd and single-minded in their approach. If marketing is supposed to be about creating meaningful differences, the brand’s package needs to support that differentiation.

Although there is only one key packaging strategy, executing differentiation correctly is not as simplistic. **There are a number of executions that are successful, as you will see in the following 5 examples across categories.** Warning: this is not a “one size fits all” or “pick-and-choose” list!



1. **COLOR DIVERSITY**. Color is a primary mnemonic, like shape. It is one of your first lines of defense. Choose a color that is appropriate to the category, consumer and product benefit. This is not a solution that remains available in all categories, but there are still a few out there that no brand has claimed yet!

Examples:

Eyecare:

With limited facings, the green pack for Bausch + Lomb's **Biotrue** stands apart by bucking the blue trend in contact lens care. Biotrue matches the pH of healthy tears, and contains hyaluronan, a lubricant found naturally in the eye. The marketing slogan is "inspired by the biology of your eyes."TM



Food storage:

Green Genius biodegradable plastic bags use brown kraft to immediately communicate their eco-friendly positioning.

Paper goods:

Marcal **small steps** toilet tissue uses yellow to make visual noise in an aisle of cool blues, greens, and white.

Babycare:

Made of organic cotton, **Huggies Pure & Natural** brand employs green very effectively in an aisle full of red and blue diaper packaging. The product is hypoallergenic, with aloe and vitamin E.



Getting the consumer to notice your brand is half the battle. What is unseen is unsold.
Color can cut through a category with lightning speed.

2. **THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE.** The eye is the calm, center core of a powerful storm. Some brands have gained visibility by being the calm in a sea of loud packaging noise.

Examples:

Refrigerated bakery:

Pillsbury introduced **simply**, competing with its own lines of refrigerated cookie and biscuit dough. The package notes “0g trans fat, no HFCS, no artificial flavors, colors or preservatives.”

The more subdued graphic approach indicates a higher quality product inside.



Dried Fruit and Nuts:

Prunes (dried plums) are gaining in popularity as a nutritious on-the-go snack thanks to their antioxidant properties. Sunsweet expanded their prune line with a preservative-free SKU. They invented the name **D'Noir**, which is appealing to their sophisticated adult target. A number of techniques are utilized to make this package successful on shelf:

- an editorial photo approach for the plums,
- the soft matte material,
- classic font selection
- discreet parent logo.



Fruit snacks:

In a category full of loud kid graphics, General Mills chose to use the **simply** name with another brand, in another aisle.

simply targets the parent and older kid with graphics that are not on a sugar high. The package shows real fruit, and links to the original Roll-ups brand with a vertical product illustration. **simply** amplifies its presence by simplifying.



3. **WHAT'S IN A NAME?** Many manufacturers are letting the ingredient list tell the story, either in number or name. Numerals possess the third level of impact (after shape and color) for consumers' attention. We have selected just a few of the great names in the market today:

Frozen dairy:

Haagen Dazs **five** has five ingredients.

The name is a differentiator within the brand's own portfolio, as well as provoking curiosity at shelf.



Petfood:

Rachel Ray's Nutrish **just 6** dog treats also list the ingredients on the front of the package. The neutral color and large numeral provide competitive shelf impact.



Home improvement:

Zero VOC, eco-safe paint and tints are being introduced as either new brands, or new lines within existing brands. Sherwin Williams' **Harmony** line uses soy and sunflower oil in their formulation and has the Good Housekeeping seal, ICI/Home Depot **Freshaire** makes the benefit the name, Benjamin Moore produces **Natura**. These names immediately signify a change to the consumer. Competitive brands such as Mythic and Olympic rely on other strategies.



Dow **SafeTouch** insulation is fiberglass-free insulation made of polyester fibers. It is safe to touch and breathe during installation.



Snackfoods:

Kraft's **Back to Nature** brand name conjures up thoughts of real food from the farm. Cartons are made of 100% recycled paperboard. Products have no artificial flavors or preservatives, hydrogenated oils, or high fructose corn syrup.



Household cleaning:

Clorox **green works** cleaners are made with plant- and mineral-based cleaning ingredients that clean without harsh chemical fumes and residue. The company went out on a limb and scored a home run; now other brands are looking to use similar eco-friendly cues.



Recently, SC Johnson has applied the **nature's source** sub-brand to their Windex, Shout and Scrubbing Bubbles brands.

• **Ingredients / benefits on front face**

General Mills' Yoplait **simply...GoGurt** tells parents what they want to know, without needing to flip the pack.



Food Should Taste Good lists the ingredients on the front of the pack: Flax, sunflower and sesame seeds, quinoa, soy, brown rice.



4. **STYLE.** As we indicated earlier, executing these techniques is not as simple or easy as it appears. In addition, the strategy of differentiation is supported by countless design executions that are being seen on today's clean labels, and others will continue to be needed and invented as clean label matures. Here are additional design opportunities for differentiation:

- **Illustration** is being used to cut through the clutter in a number of categories:

Beech Nut's **Let's Grow** brand features a "No Junk Promise™" to moms, promising no added junk including: No artificial flavors, colors, MSG or preservatives, all-natural ingredients without any trans fats or added refined sugar, no high fructose corn syrup or excessive sodium. In addition, the products are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals for healthy growth.



Interestingly, another baby food brand, **Earth's Best**, also uses illustration, and has been for years. Note the marked difference in the two styles.



Ricola has been using illustration since its inception, depicting the 13 medicinal herbs from Switzerland that are blended to make the products.

Zarbees natural cough syrup for kids sports a bee illustration that signifies that this is a product for children, and also serves as a mnemonic device.



True lemon is a line of cold pressed and crystallized fruit for water, tea and recipes. 100% natural, zero calories and carbs. The background illustration mimics the skin of the fruit.



The illustration style that defines **Odwalla** implies a grass-roots company. The company recently moved to PlantBottle packaging.



- **General design direction**

Sierra Mist **Natural** presents a softer image than most brands in the carbonated drinks category.



The graphics on **Juicy Juice Natural Sparkling Juice** targets the older kid; the colorful cans are designed to fit kids' hands, making them easy to grip. Each can provides one serving of fruit.



Preen's Organic Vegetable Garden label is simpler and cleaner than competitors, with appealing color and fonts that support current gardening trends.



- **lower case**

As you've probably noticed in your own purchases, lower case brand names are seen in almost every category. Lower case can feel less corporate or processed, more contemporary/new, and appear more friendly, part of everyday life. In addition to those noted on previous pages, here are a few more brands that have discovered a lower case advantage:

-Planters harvest, method, truvia, Snyder's eatSMART naturals, pop•chips.

5. **SUBSTRATE + STRUCTURE.** The pack size, shape and “feel” are also indicators of the clean label trend. Eco-friendly packaging improvements have also contributed, but will be the subject of a future article.

- **Substrate**

Hill’s® Science Diet® **Nature’s Best**® dog and cat food is a natural, balanced pet food clinically proven to provide complete nutrition, made from natural meats, grains, fruits and vegetables. The foil bag supports the prestige positioning, and helps elevate perception to justify premium cost. In a growth industry with many new brands, the foil is distinctive and memorable.



BearNaked cereal, **eatsmart naturals**, and a number of other brands chose to incorporate a soft matte finish on film or foil bags, for a less commercial appearance.



Back to Nature, **Kashi**, and others use recycled kraft-color paperboard to support a less-processed positioning.



- **Structure**

Marzetti’s **Simply Dressed** refrigerated salad dressings chose a short carafe-style bottle to differentiate from the straight-walled glass containers in the section.



Although we have not included many organic brands, **Pacific Naturals** soups are sold in a carton, immediately distinguishing itself from the brands that command more real estate in the category.



In the fruit grocery aisle, among the cans and bowls of fruit, the **Polar** brand’s glass jars allow the product to do the talking. The high quality of the fruits is a beautiful display... the package would ‘fit’ in a farmers market as much as in the grocery store.



This is an overview of pack strategy for today’s clean label products. What happens when a competitor or store brand mimics your label, thereby weakening your visual differentiation? This is beginning to happen already (in sweeteners and homecare). Be vigilant, and safeguard your visual brand position by reviewing your packaging annually, and updating/strengthening the brand as needed.

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